



Symposium attendees ponder "The Idea of Newfoundland"

NEWFOUNDLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter



News, resources and events for Newfoundland & Labrador's history community

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NHS Newsletter, Spring 2003
This is a quarterly publication of the Newfoundland Historical Society. Questions, comments & membership enquiries may be addressed to:

Room 15, Colonial Building
Military Road
St. John's, NL
A1C 2C9

Tel: 709.722.3191
Fax: 709. 729.0578
email: nhs@thezone.net

Visit our website at:
www.infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/nfldhist

2003 Symposium an Overwhelming Success

The Newfoundland Historical Society's 2003 symposium, *The Idea of Newfoundland: Nationalism, Identity and Culture from the 19th Century to the Present*, featured a slate of speakers who captivated audiences over the course of the event that ran from March 27th to March 29th. While all of the lectures focussed around the theme of "The Idea of Newfoundland", each speaker shaped their lecture to their own area of expertise, allowing the audience to see how nationalism has played such a large role in Newfoundland's development in the last couple of centuries. Their words obviously struck a chord with the audience, who were ready with questions and comments after the speakers had finished.

Jerry Bannister's talk explored how cultural memory has evolved over the course of the 20th century. The themes of struggle and conflict have forever been part of our history from the days of Prowse to Peckford. The audience wondered how deeply we need to feel loss as part of our Newfoundland identity. Bannister responded that this has been a fairly recent development but it is one that shows growing strength. This notion carried over into a discussion of the fishery and the pain Newfoundlanders have felt in the years since the moratorium.

The Saturday morning session of the symposium started with a talk by Jeff Webb. Covering the period between the first usage of the term Newfoundlander in the 1760s through to the Smallwood era and beyond, Webb questioned what it is that ties us together as a nation and a people. The audience offered some suggestions, such as the role of language in cultural identity. Webb noted that we perceive those who speak a different language, even though they still live in Newfoundland, as being different, as "other". Some audience members commented on the role of our built heritage, oral traditions and songs as feeding into our sense of what it means to be a Newfoundlander.

Peter Pope spoke about how 17th century Newfoundland history has largely been forgotten or left unexplored. Pope made the point that Acadia will never forget its 17th century settlements but that Newfoundland has. Why is this the case? Many similarities existed between Acadia and Newfoundland in that era such as their early failure as commercial ventures and the discouragement of settlement by over regulation of the fishery. Pope tied this in with the notion of victimhood and reconciliation. Newfoundlanders, he suggested, questioned the existence of this settlement. So many other colonies flourished; why have we not fared as well as New England? The audience questioned the idea of failure of the early settlements. One audience member pointed to the optimism found in many of the 17th century proposals relating to Newfoundland. Pope stated that there was plenty of reason to be optimistic. Newfoundland has always had resource potential. It has just taken centuries to develop it.

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President's Report

The aim of the Newfoundland Historical Society is to bring quality Newfoundland and Labrador history to the general public. It seems 2002 - 2003 was a good year, if we measure it by attendance at lectures and the annual symposium, sales of Society booklets, and the media's interest in covering the Society's events and lobbying efforts. In line with the aim of bringing history to the public, Society events were free of charge again this year. Thanks largely to a grant from the Newfoundland Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, the Society obtained enough money to run its most expensive event - the symposium - without charge to attendees and without going into debt.

The program this year included six lectures (delivered by C. Wheaton, M. Wilkshire, P. Pope, C. English, J. Shawyer, and the George Story Lecturer H. Rollman) and a symposium on *The Idea of Newfoundland*, which was held over a period of three days. The executive hopes the audiences enjoyed these events. Those who could not attend the symposium might be interested to know that preparations to publish the proceedings are underway.

As mentioned above, the Society's publications are selling well. The latest booklet, Ingeborg Marshall's *The Beothuk*, was promoted this year and is currently selling in bookstores, pharmacies and museum shops around the province. The Society's newsletter

under Anita Best's editorship received a facelift and now includes new departments such as news from beyond the Overpass, articles on heritage topics and letters.

The Society is honoured to be closely connected to Memorial University's new *Newfoundland Quarterly*. Members of the Society's executive serve on the Newfoundland Quarterly Foundation Board and the Editor's Advisory Committee. The Society is responsible for the Aspects section in each issue, and each Society member is a *Newfoundland Quarterly* subscriber. This close relationship is possible because the Quarterly's editorial position and the Society's goals are so complementary. The Society would like to thank Dr. Leslie Harris for his decades of work in the Society's interest as editor of *Aspects*.

The Society continued to promote history in the schools with the Department of Education, working for more and better quality of content in the proposed Grade 8 history course and, with the Association of Heritage industries, lobbied to save the Colonial Building by developing its use as an office for heritage organizations. This would preserve this historic structure, yet keep it a working building. The Society anxiously awaits the decision on the building as it is so closely tied with the Society's future. The membership is strong; the outlook is good. Thank you for your continuing interest in the history of the province and in the Society's activities.

Joan Ritcey, President

The Newfoundland Historical Society Executive

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Jerry Bannister
Anita Best
Emma Butler
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Sarah Flaherty
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Sandra Wheeler
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Do you have news, upcoming events, or opinions you'd like to share? We welcome your submissions to future issues of the newsletter. If you have an article you'd like to contribute, please contact the NHS Office at the address on the front cover. We look forward to hearing from you.



Labrador West's new Gateway nears completion

Regular Column

Beyond the Overpass

In this issue, Joyce Montague provides an update on the development of Labrador City's new Gateway facility.

An historic event will be held in Labrador City in June of this year when a new interpretation complex will be officially opened to the public. The new building, called "The Gateway," is located on the Trans Labrador Highway within the town limits and is a 520 square metre white pine log structure, nestled in the pristine Labrador wilderness.

The project is an initiative of the Labrador Heritage Society -- Height of Land Branch, which had long sought a place to depict the unique history and culture of Labrador and will highlight the Labrador West portion of the province in the interpretation of its historic past. Inside the building is a large foyer to accommodate visitors. The curator's office and a board room are situated on either side of the interesting and attractive entrance way. The local Labrador West Tourism Development Association has spacious accommodation with information on all destinations in Labrador that will be of interest to tourists and locals alike, as well as exhaustive details on services available in the local area. It is the place for visitors to obtain any information required.

The Labrador Heritage Society operates the craft shop where all types of souvenirs and gifts pertaining to Labrador can be

obtained, including the famous and much revered Labrador flag on which this Branch of the Society holds the copyright.

The most exciting and informative part of the building is the interpretation centre. Designed by Ed Montague, a native Labradorian and chair of the interpretation committee, this 200 square metre section will showcase and interpret the rich history of Labrador West beginning from the melting of the glaciers only 5000 years ago and the appearance of the nomadic Innu circa 3500 years BP (Before Present). The stone tools that have been discovered by archaeologists will be on display along with interpretive panels which will document the known and inferred habits of these pre-historic peoples.

French fur trader Louie Jolliett, of Mississippi fame, is recorded to have traded here in 1695 and is highlighted in the French Fur Trade section, which also includes taxidermy models of the fur bearing animals trapped in the region. Continuing in chronological order, the French were succeeded by the English in the form of the Hudson's Bay Company who established Fort Nascopeie on the centre of the Labrador plateau to intercept the Innu on their age-old travel routes to gain the furs before they could be traded to rivals on Quebec's North Shore or Lake Melville -- most of whom they soon bought out. A model of Fort Nascopeie is the centrepiece of this era and exhibits include the post records (1840-

1856) and artifacts obtained on the site. Other exhibits include the geological and geographical data of geologist A.P. Low (1894-95), the ill-fated "Labrador Gold Rush" (1932), and the mineral explorations of the Labrador Mining and Exploration Company leading up to "Ore by '54." The Iron Ore Company of Canada and Wabush Mines' displays, as well as Churchill Falls, will feature exhibits from their inception to the present day and the growth of the modern communities. Historic land use of the Aboriginal peoples also continues to be an area of investigation.

"History" and "old" won't be synonyms in the Gateway Complex. In addition to hard artifact exhibits and interpretive signage, the Gateway Complex will house one of the most extensive collections of images, documents, even film, of the Labrador West region thanks to an ambitious IT project that allows the Gateway to extend its collections into the virtual areas of cyberspace. A DVD-ROM driven mini-theatre capable of recreating history with surround sound and incredible images is a keystone of the centre. Through the wonder of the information highway, Labrador history will be made available to the world as the Centre's impressive website grows by leaps and bounds. The Gateway Committee and the Labrador Heritage Society -- Height of Land Branch are extremely proud of the complex and invite everyone to visit the "Gateway" and sense a touch of our exciting past, present and future.



Local News

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Below is a list of titles newly acquired by the Centre for Newfoundland Studies. It is not a complete list. If you have any questions, please contact the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at 737-7476.

The Encyclopedia of the British Empire : the first encyclopedic record of the greatest empire in the history of the world / edited by Charles W. Dornville-Fife; illustrated with 2000 photographs and maps.

About Aboriginal Peoples : a key to research and understanding / by Bernard Cleary and Associates Inc. ; researched and written by Rene Boudreault ... [et al.] ; graphics and editing, Chantal Cleary.

Newfoundland, its origin, its rise and fall, also, an epitome of the Jersey crisis in January, 1886 : an episode of the history of Jersey / by John Sullivan.

Sailors Ashore : RCN interactions with civilian society at St. John's, 1941-1945 / by Malcolm MacLeod & Brad Penney.

Newfoundland at the Crossroads: documents on Confederation with Canada / edited by John Edward FitzGerald.

Etat de la recherche concernant les Franco-Terreneuviens

The uses of oral history and folklore in an area of illegal settlement : the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, Newfoundland.

Lost Lands, Forgotten Stories : a woman's journey to the heart of Labrador / Alexandra Pratt.

The Amazing Adventures of Captain Bob Bartlett / Susan Chalker Browne ; illustrated by Mel D'Souza.

The Mourner's Dance : what we do when people die / Katherine Ashenburg.

Yuletide Yarns : stories of Newfoundland and Labrador Christmases gone by / Mike McCarthy & Alice Lannon, eds.

In Whose Best Interests? : women, custody and access in Newfoundland and Labrador / Joanne Hussey and Gander Status of Women Council Justice Issues Committee: Elaine Condon...[et al.]

Glimpses of the Wonderful : the life of Philip Henry Gosse, 1810-1888 / Ann Thwaite.

Rue des Terre-Neuvas : Normands et Bretons a Terre Neuve au XIXeme siecle / Jean-Pierre Martin.

Challenge and Change : an illustrated history of engineering and geoscience in Newfoundland and Labrador / by D.R. Tarrant.

BAY ROBERTS PILOT PROJECT

The Bay Roberts Heritage Society has completed a pilot project for the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) Community Memories Initiative. It is part of the CHIN Virtual Museum Project and is entitled *The Cable Building Story*.

To view the Bay Roberts Community Memories project, go to www.virtualmuseum.ca and follow the links to the Community Memories page, the Newfoundland and Labrador page, and on to the Cable Building Story.

WEST COAST EXHIBITION CENTRE

Premier Grimes and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation Julie Bettney, provided an update on the West Coast Exhibition and Cultural Facility which will serve the arts and heritage needs of the west coast of Newfoundland and the southeast coast of Labrador. It will cost approximately \$3.25 million to construct the new facility at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook. The Provincial Museum will provide an additional \$650,000 to be directed towards the museum exhibition which will be housed in the Corner Brook Museum. A call for proposals has been made and a decision was planned for April 3, 2003. On July 1, 2003, the tender for construction will be announced, with the goal of construction start-up in August.

National News

LAUNCH OF THE CANADIAN GENEALOGY CENTRE WEB SITE

March 26, 2003 (Ottawa) - The Library and Archives of Canada is pleased to announce the official launch of the Canadian Genealogy

Centre Web site. This unique virtual centre will be the primary online site for access to genealogical resources in Canada. Over the years, Canadians have shown a growing interest in finding out more about their family histories, stories and roots. In fact, genealogy and family history research are the fastest growing hobbies in North America.

The Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site is an online centre that will provide access to all genealogical resources in Canada. It will offer genealogical content, services, advice, and tools, and provide Canadians with the opportunity to work on joint projects online in both official languages. The Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site will allow history to be written in the first person-our history, our family, our community-by making available to Canadians the vast network of genealogical information that exists across the country and around the world. Visit the Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site at: www.genealogy.gc.ca

This unique centre was made possible in part through the Canadian Culture Online Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. For more information, please contact:

Jean-Sébastien Potvin
Agent de projet / Project Agent
Bibliothèque et Archives du Canada
/ Library and Archives of Canada
Projet Centre canadien de
généalogie / Canadian Genealogy
Centre Project
395, rue Wellington Street,
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0N3
Telephone : (613) 995-8085
Fax : (613) 995-6274
Toll-free number : 1-866-578-7777
Email : jpotvin@archives.ca

International News

SUMMER INSTITUTE IN NEW YORK

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office will hold its annual Summer Institute on Oral History from June 16 - 27, 2003. The theme of this year's Institute is: Telling Lives: Memory, Orality and Testimony in Oral History. The focus will be on the ethical, methodological and theoretical challenges of documenting the power of testimony, and oral history, to shape public discourse and strengthen communities whose histories have been subjugated or silenced within dominant historical paradigms and media accounts. Within these parameters, they will explore the subjectivity of gendered, ethnic, cultural and other identity based narratives -

particularly the ways in which these accounts subvert and correct public myth and memory. They will also probe the ways in which oral history, in its historical origins and its contemporary uses, is a radical form of testimony in which both collective and individual memory are preserved in texts, and other media, as social history and literary genre.

Faculty for this year's Summer Institute will include Alessandro Portelli of the University of Rome; Silvia Salvatici of the Archives of Memory Project, Florence; Linda Shopes, of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Rina Benmayor of California State University Monterey Bay; Bonnie Gurewitsch of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust; Steve Rowland, CultureWorks; Revan Schendler of Smith College;

Mary Marshall Clark, Director, Oral History Research Office; Jessica Wiederhorn, Associate Director, Oral History Research Office; Ronald Grele, Director Emeritus, Oral History Research Office.

The application deadline is May 10, 2003. For further information please visit our website:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/in/div/oral/summer.html>

Or contact:

Jessica Wiederhorn
Oral History Research Office
801 Butler Library, Box 20
535 West 114th Street, MC 1129
New York, NY 10027
Phone: (212) 854-4012
Fax: (212) 854-5378
E-mail: jw712@columbia.edu

CALL FOR PAPERS

Memory and Globalization: The XIIIth International Oral History Conference - Rome, Italy, 23-26 June 2004

Proposals are invited from around the world for contributions to the XIIIth International Oral History Conference hosted by the International Oral History Association in collaboration with the City of Rome. Proposals may be for a conference paper, a workshop session or a thematic panel. Only papers with a clear focus on oral history will be taken into consideration. Papers will also be evaluated according to their methodological and theoretical significance. The specific theme for the conference is 'Memory and Globalization'. Proposals are also invited which address ongoing oral history issues and practices. Conference sub-themes include: The processes of globalization,

